

Message Text

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44

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
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O 271501Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1613

INFO AMEMBASSY NICOSIA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 7126

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, LE

SUBJECT: SHELLING OF EMBASSY BEIRUT

REF: (A) BEIRUT 6980, (B) BEIRUT 6987, (C) NICOSIA 2517

1. REFTTEL C REPORTS THAT U.S. DIPLOMATS HOUGHTON AND MACK RAISED ISSUE OF SHELLING NEAR EMBASSY BEIRUT WITH DORY YPT DORY CHAMOUN. LATTER REPLIED THAT NO WESTERN GOVTS HAD PROTESTED PALESTINIAN/LEFTIST SHELLING OF EAST BEIRUT. HE ALSO SAID THAT SHELL WHICH LANDED NEAR HOTEL MONTEMAR IN JOUNIEH (WHERE HOUGHTON AND MACK WERE STAYING) HAD COME FROM AREA NEAR U.S. EMBASSY IN WEST BEIRUT.

2. DORY CHAMOUN'S STATEMENTS ARE WRONG. (1) UK GOVT DID PROTEST SHELLING ON BOTH SIDES IN APPEAL ADDRESSED TO ALL RPT ALL COMBATANTS CARRIED BY BBC AND AFP IN DISPATCH FROM LONDON AND REPEATED IN BEIRUT PRESS AUG 20 (SITREP AUG 20); FRG MADE SIMILAR APPEAL. (2) OUR INFORMATION INDICATES THAT SHELLING OF JOUNIEH TO WHICH CHAMOUN ALLUDED DID NOT COME FROM AREA NEAR U.S. EMBASSY. ONLY WEAPONS IN PALESTINIAN/LEBANESE ARAB ARMY INVENTORY WITH SUFFICIENT RANGE TO REACH JOUNIEH FROM AREA OF U.S. EMBASSY (17,200 METERS) ARE 122 MM ROCKET AND FRENCH 155MM HOWITZER. NEITHER WEAPON HAS BEEN FIRED FROM NEAR EMBASSY FOR AT LEAST ONE MONTH.

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3. OUR RECOMMENDATION IN REFTTEL A WAS THAT DEPT ISSUE STATEMENT CALLING ON BOTH SIDES TO CEASE INDISCRIMINATE SHELLING OF CIVILIAN AREAS. WHILE WE ARE NATURALLY CONCERNED ABOUT SAFETY OF AMERICANS IN BEIRUT, INCLUDING EMBASSY PERSONNEL, IT WAS OUR INTENTION THAT PROPOSED STATEMENT WOULD FOCUS ON DANGER TO LIVES OF ALL NON-COMBATANTS ON BOTH SIDES, MOST OF WHOM ARE OF COURSE LEBANESE. WE STILL BELIEVE IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR HOUGHTON/MACK TO MAKE THIS POINT TO PRESIDENT FRANGIE AND OTHER SENIOR LEBANESE GOVT OFFICIALS WHEN THEY RETURN TO JOUNIEH.
HUNT

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